

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

SAM-01 IO-10 /073 W

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P R 271737Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1888

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1103

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MILI, PO

SUBJ: NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA FACES ITS CRITICS

REF: LISBON 1026 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: REACTING TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF ITS RECENT ASSUMPTION OF CERTAIN NEW POWERS IN PURGE, ECONOMIC, AND PUBLIC SAFETY FIELDS, NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA (JSN) ISSUED STATEMENT DESIGNED TO "JUSTIFY" ITS NEW POWERS. STATEMENT LIKELY TO RAISE MORE QUESTIONS THAN IT ANSWERS. END SUMMARY.

1. FEB 27 JSN STATEMENT ATTACKED HEAD ON THREE SPECIFIC CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST IT: THAT ITS NEW POWERS RESTRICT POWERS OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT (PG); THAT "PACT" BETWEEN ARMED FORCES
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MOVEMENT (AFM) AND POLITICAL PARTIES UNILATERALLY BROKEN BY FAILURE

OF AFM TO CONSULT WITH LATTER REGARDING NEW LEGISLATIVE POWERS FOR JSN; AND THAT THIS FIRST STEP TOWARDS MILITARY DICTATORSHIP.

2. JSN CLAIMS THAT ITS LEGISLATIVE POWERS RESTRICTED TO WELL-DEFINED AREAS. PG FAILED TO ENACT NEEDED LEGISLATION, SO JSN HAS TAKEN ON TASK. BESIDES, NOTES JSN, PG MANDATE DERIVES FROM AFM, OF WHICH JSN SUPREME LEGAL ORGAN ACCORDING TO CONSTITUTION. JSN NATURALLY TAKES ACTIONS (OF WHICH ASSUMPTION NEW POWERS AN EXAMPLE) TO ENSURE IMPLANTATION OF DEMOCRACY IN COUNTRY.

3. JSN STATEMENT ALSO BRUSHES ASIDE CRITICISM THAT PACT ALTERED. IT POINTS OUT THAT JSN HAS CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SAFEGUARD COMPLIANCE WITH AFM PROGRAM. UNTIL PRESENT, DIRECT JSN INTERVENTION WAS NOT NECESSARY TO FULFILL ITS OBLIGATIONS. CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE MADE IT NECESSARY FOR JSN TO INTERVENE DIRECTLY FOR FIRST TIME, AND IT IS ONLY EXERCISING WHAT IT HAS HAD RIGHT TO DO.

4. ACCORDING TO STATEMENT, AFM HAS NEVER SOUGHT TO INSTALL MILITARY DICTATORSHIP. HAD IT WANTED TO, IT COULD HAVE DONE SO AFTER APRIL 25 OR SEPTEMBER 28. JSN ADMITS, HOWEVER, TO POSSIBILITY THAT "DETERIORATION OF NATIONAL SITUATION COULD LEAD TO CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE ONLY SOLUTION (ALTHOUGH TRANSITORY) MIGHT BE A MILITARY DICTATORSHIP." JSN ACTIONS ONLY DESIGNED TO "ASSURE REVOLUTION CONTINUES" AND TO PREVENT OBSTRUCTIONIST MANEUVERS THAT MIGHT MAKE "THE PLURALISTIC DEMOCRACY WE ALL SEEK" IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE.

5. COMMENT: RATHER THAN CALM WIDESPREAD SUSPICION ABOUT ULTIMATE INTENTIONS OF AFM, THIS COMMUNIQUE MAY HAVE OPPOSITE EFFECT. MENTION OF POSSIBILITY, EVEN IF FOR SHORT TIME, OF MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IF POLITICAL SCENE DETERIORATES WILL NOT CALM MODERATE PARTIES. PARTIES BOUND TO SEE COMMUNIQUE AS NOT-SO-SUBTLE PRESSURE ON THEM TO PASS LEGISLATION FAVORED BY AFM AND TO REACH AGREEMENT IN OTHER AREAS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: JUNTA, CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, POLICIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON01103
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750069-0777
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975027/aaaaagfi.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LISBON 1026
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <22 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATIONAL SALVATION JUNTA FACES ITS CRITICS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, PO, NSJ
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006